

PREACHING CHRIST.—The purpose of this article is to explain what is meant by ‘preaching Christ.’ It is assumed that to preach Christ is the preacher’s function, and the intention is to show what such preaching involved in the beginning, and what it must include still if it is to be true to its original. Changing conditions may demand for it different forms, but presumably under all forms there will be a vital continuity or rather identity in the substance which is preached.

1. The NT as a whole presents Jesus in the character of *the Christ*. When the first preachers preached Him, it was in this character. ‘God,’ says Peter, ‘hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ’ (Act 2:36). ‘Saul confounded the Jews that dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the Christ’ (Act 9:22). All the Evangelists agree with this: see Mat 1:1; Mat 1:18, Mar 1:1, Luk 2:11, Joh 20:31. Now ‘the Christ,’ or ‘the Messiah,’ was not a meaningless expression for Jews: it had a distinct meaning, and a great range of ideas and hopes attached to it. There was a Messianic dogmatic, as it has been called, among the Jews, quite apart from the question who was to be the Messiah; or, to put it otherwise, Jewish disciples had a Christology before they became believers in Jesus as the Christ. It is easy to see the dangers connected with this situation. If we take the sentence, ‘Jesus is the Christ,’ we may put the emphasis either on the subject or the predicate. We can conceive how a Jew, whose imagination was on flame with the apocalyptic hopes associated with the Messiah, might allow these hopes, when he accepted the Christian faith, to overpower the person of Jesus; Jesus, so to speak, would become nothing to him but the person through whom expectations were to be realized which in their origin had nothing to do with Jesus. There may be occasions in the NT where we have to ask whether something of this kind has not taken place, but they are not conspicuous. In the NT, when it is said that Jesus is the Christ, the emphasis is always as much on the subject as on the predicate. The proof of the proposition is always found in something which has been done by or to Jesus. In point of fact, it is found in the first instance in His resurrection and exaltation to God’s right hand. It is this participation in the sovereignty of God that makes Him Lord and Christ; and the content of this, in all essentials, is not derived from the Messianic dogmatic of the Jewish schools, but from the experience of the Apostles themselves. This experience has two aspects, the one in the stricter sense historical, the other in the stricter sense spiritual. The one, put briefly, is, ‘We have seen the Lord’; the other, ‘He hath poured forth this—the new life at Pentecost—which ye see and hear’ (Act 2:23). The one is represented by the series of witnesses to the resurrection cited by St. Paul in 1Co 15:5-9, the other by the series of new spiritual experiences and convictions to which he can appeal in 1Co 15:12-19. It is the testimony of the Apostles to the resurrection of Jesus, and experience of the new life in His spirit, not any pre-Christian Christology, or Jewish Messianic dogmatic, that define for the first Christians the content of the title ‘the Christ.’ And it may safely be said, to begin with, that there is no such thing as preaching Christ unless it is the preaching of *One who lives and reigns*. If Jesus is at

the right hand of God,—if He is behind every revival of spiritual life in the Church,—then He is the Christ, and can be preached as such; but if not, not.

2. At first, naturally, great stress was laid upon this. The Apostles sincerely believed that they had seen the Lord, and they could not conceive of their calling as having anything in it to take precedence of this—that they were witnesses of the resurrection, and therefore of the Messiahship of Jesus. No doubt this gave its whole character to primitive Christianity; but if we accept the testimony of the Apostles to the resurrection, we shall be slow to say that it transformed its character, and made it a new and essentially an inferior thing as compared with the religion of Jesus. Jesus was not forgotten when the Apostles, appealing to the resurrection and to Pentecost, argued that He was the Christ, God's King, through whom all the hopes which God had inspired were to be fulfilled. Harnack, indeed, has argued that in its eagerness to prove that Jesus is the Christ—that is, to discharge a task in apologetic theology—the Church spent too much of the force which ought to have been given to teaching men to observe all things whatsoever He had commanded (*Dogmengesch.*¹ [Note: designates the particular edition of the work referred] i. 57 f.). But there is no necessary antagonism between the two things, and except for their faith in His exaltation as the Christ the Apostles would never have taught anything at all. Weinel (*Paulus*, 108 f.) represents the same tendency in a much less guarded form. 'After the death of Jesus,' he says, 'the ethical religion of redemption, which had entered the world with Jesus, underwent its most decisive transformation of a formal kind; it ceased to be the religion of sonship to God, and became faith in the Christ-nature of the man Jesus.... The disciples demanded faith in Him as the Messiah exalted to God, and in the conception of His death as an atonement appointed by God for sins. With the experience of the resurrection and with this dogma of the death of the Messiah, the Christ-religion, Christianity in the narrower sense, begins.' One almost wonders if Weinel thinks it a pity that Jesus rose from the dead, or that His disciples believed that He did, and were overpoweringly influenced by a faith so tremendous; but this apart, the assumption in all criticism of this sort is that when the Apostles preached Jesus as the Christ they concentrated all their attention on the predicate of the proposition, which owed no part of its import to Jesus, and treated the subject as if it had no meaning. Even on *a priori* grounds we should say this was improbable, and there is a very significant piece of evidence that it is not true. This is found in the qualifications of the man appointed to take the place of Judas. His function was to be a witness to the resurrection—that is, to the Messiahship of Jesus; he was, in other words, to be a preacher of the Christ. But he was chosen from 'the men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that he was received up from us' (Act 1:21 f). To preach Christ, even in the days when belief in the resurrection was so overpowering, one required to have a full knowledge of Jesus. It is idle to say that

Jesus is the Christ if we do not know who or what Jesus is. It has no meaning to say that an unknown person is at God's right hand, exalted and sovereign; the more ardently men believed that God had given them a Prince and a Saviour in this exaltation, the more eager would they be to know all that could possibly be learned about Him. If there were men alive who had lived in His company, they would wait assiduously on their teaching (Act 2:42). They would be more than curious to know what spirit He was of, and whether they could detect in His appearance and career on earth 'the works of the Christ' (Mat 11:2). They would expect to find some kind of moral congruity between His life on the one hand, and His transcendent dignity and calling on the other; there would be a demand, from the very beginning, for facts about Him. From this point of view, then, we may say that preaching Christ is not taking leave of Jesus in any sense or to any extent; it is preaching Jesus exalted and sovereign.

The passage just quoted (Act 1:21 f.) is practically coterminous with the oldest form of Gospel which we possess. 'Beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that he was taken up': these are the limits within which lies the Gospel according to Mark. Hence we might say that to preach this gospel is to preach Christ, on condition, of course, that it is preached in its connexion with Jesus exalted. Merely to narrate the history of Jesus, even if we had the materials for it, would not be to preach Christ. We need, of course, to know the historical Jesus, as the qualifications for Apostleship show; but to preach Christ means to preach that Person as present in the sovereignty of His resurrection. It is not preaching Christ if we tell the story of the life and death merely as events in a past continually growing more remote. It is not preaching Christ though we tell this story in the most vivid and moving fashion, and gather round it, by the exercise of historical imagination or dramatic skill, the liveliest emotions; it is not preaching Christ to present the life and death of Jesus as a high and solemn tragedy, with power in it to purify the soul by pity and terror. There is no preaching of Christ, possessed of religious significance, that does not rest on the basis on which the Apostolic preaching rested: His exaltation in power, and therefore His perpetual presence. The historical Jesus is indispensable; but if we are to have a Christian religion, the historical must become present and eternal. This it does through the resurrection as apprehended by faith.

3. For the purposes of this article it is assumed that the Synoptic Gospels give such a knowledge of the historical Jesus as is sufficient for the preacher's ends. No doubt He is depicted for us there by writers who believed in Him as the Christ, and for whom the light of His exaltation was reflected on the lowliness of His earthly career; but this light is not necessarily a distorting one. We have no reason to say that there is anything in these Gospels which is untrue to the historical personality of Jesus, anything which represents Him in mind, in will, in temper, in character, in His consciousness as a whole of His relations to God and man, as other than He really

was. Extravagant things have been said by many writers of *Lives of Jesus*, from Strauss downwards, on the imperfection of our knowledge, and on the way in which the real Jesus has been disguised from the very beginning by the idealization of His figure in the faith and love of those who preached Him—and especially in the Gospels. If we concentrate our attention on the character of Jesus, on the spirit of His words and deeds and death, on His consciousness of His relations to God and men—in a word, on what He was and achieved in the spiritual world—it is the present writer's conviction that we shall feel the very reverse of this to be the truth. We may be dubious about this or that word, this or that incident in the Gospels, but we have no dubiety at all about the Person. The great life that stands out before us in the Gospels is more real than anything in the world; and Jesus is so far from being hidden from us that it is no exaggeration to say that we know Him better than anybody who has ever lived on earth.

It does not follow from this that we accept the Evangelists' proofs that Jesus was the Christ, or that in preaching Christ we employ the same arguments as they to show that Jesus has the unique significance for religion which was represented for them by the Messianic title. Broadly speaking, these arguments were two—one from prophecy and one from miracles. Both may be accepted in principle without being accepted in form. The argument from prophecy is an assertion of the continuity of revelation, of the one purpose of God running through it all, and culminating in Jesus. Jesus is the fulfilment of all the hopes contained in the ancient revelation, and we look for no other: 'How many soever are the promises of God, in him is the yea' (2Co 1:20); we recognize this, and the absolute significance which it secures for Jesus in religion. But we no longer prove it to ourselves by emphasizing, in the manner of the First Gospel, particular correspondences between incidents in the life of Jesus and passages in the OT. There is no religious and no intellectual value for us in such fulfilments of prophecy as Mat 2:15; Mat 2:18; Mat 2:23. We should apply the Pauline principle (2Co 1:20) quite differently, recognizing that correspondence is one thing, fulfilment another. Jesus did not really come to fulfil prophecy in the sense of carrying out a programme the details of which were fixed beforehand; He came to fulfil Himself, or to fulfil the will of the Father, as the Father made it plain to Him from step to step; and though, on one occasion (Mar 11:1-10), He Himself arranged an incident in which a literal correspondence with a prophecy was secured, it is not such a phenomenon which makes Him the Christ to us. Its value now lies in showing that He regarded Himself as the Christ, the promised King. And so with the argument from miracles, which, though not formally put, is perhaps as characteristic of the Second Gospel as the argument from prophecy is of the First. The works of Jesus, in the largest sense,—all that He did and the power which it implied,—go to give Him the importance He has in our minds. But we do not limit His works to the class commonly called miraculous; the impression left on the minds of men by His whole being and action gathers up into itself much more than this. The arguments from prophecy and

from miracles are formal ways of expressing truths which really contain much more than these forms can carry; and our impression of the truths is too direct, immediate, and complex to have justice done it by such arguments.

4. While, however, the inadequacy of such arguments to their purpose must be admitted, the purpose of the arguments is not to be overlooked. What those who first called Jesus the Christ, or preached Him as such, intended to do, was to put Him in a place which no other could share. Whatever else the name meant, it meant the King; and there was only one King. In the Christian religion Jesus was never one of a series, a person who could be classified, and be shown to His proper place in the line of great personalities who have contributed to the spiritual uplifting of the race. The study of Comparative Religion has fostered a tendency to regard Him in this light; but it cannot be said too strongly that to admit the legitimacy of such a tendency is to abandon from the very root all that has ever been known to history as Christianity. The NT is quite unequivocal about this. From the beginning Christians call Jesus 'Lord' (1Co 12:3), and recognize that God has given Him the name which is above every name (Php 2:9). All other men in the NT meet as equals on the same level, and all bow before Him as King. In His exaltation He confronts men as one Divine causality with the Father, working for their salvation. Historical Christianity, said Emerson (*Works*, Bell's ed. ii. 195), has dwelt and dwells with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus. As a criticism of some kinds of interest in dogmatic Christology, this may be true; but if it is meant to reflect on the devotion of Christians to Jesus as a Person, it is completely beside the mark. To Christians this Person has been from the beginning, and will be for ever, what no other can be. To talk of Him as the same in kind with other prophets or founders of religions,—with Moses and Isaiah, with Confucius or Buddha, or, what is even harder to understand, with Mohammed,—is to surrender anything that a NT Christian could have recognized as Christianity. To preach Christ at all we must preach Him as κύριος and μονογενής. The first name secures His unshared place in relation to men, as the latter does in relation to God; and unless He fills such a place, Christianity has no *raison d'être*. That it has is the assumption of this article, as it is the fact presented in the NT. It is, in fact, the *differentia* of Christianity as a religion that the distinction which can sometimes be drawn between a person and the cause for which he stands is in it no longer valid. To preach what Jesus preached is not preaching Christianity unless the thing preached is preached in its essential relation to Him. The truth which He announces is not independent of Himself; it is in the world only as it is incarnate in *Him*. Thus, to take as an example what many regard as the supreme category in the teaching of Jesus—the Kingdom of God: what is meant by preaching Christ here? It is very likely impossible for us to understand precisely what the expression 'Kingdom of God' conveyed in the mental atmosphere of Judaism or of the 1st cent. generally. It may be impossible for us even to understand with certainty and precision what Jesus

Himself on any given occasion meant it to convey. All shades of meaning run through it,—political, eschatological, spiritual; national, universal; here, coming: how can anyone tell whether in preaching the Kingdom of God he is preaching Christ? The answer is clear if we remember that the Kingdom of God in His sense could come only in and through Him, and that its character is ultimately determined by that fact. He Himself, in the sense at least of being God's representative, is King in it (Mat_13:41; Mat_20:21; Mat_25:34, Luk_23:42), and it is from what we know of Him, including ultimately His resurrection and exaltation, that all our conceptions of the Kingdom must be derived. To preach the cause and ignore the Person, or to preach the cause as of universal import and to assign to the Person an importance in relation to it which He only shares with an indefinite number of others, is to be untrue to the facts as the Gospels present them. Even preaching the Kingdom of God is not preaching Christ unless the Kingdom is preached as one which owes its character to the fact that Jesus is its King, and the certainty of its consummation to the fact that Jesus shares the throne of God. Christianity is not abstract optimism; it is optimism based on the exaltation of Jesus, and on the knowledge of God as revealed in Him.

5. If we bring these ideas to a point, we shall say that to preach Christ means to preach Jesus in the absolute significance for God and man which He had to His own consciousness and to the faith of the first witnesses; and to preach Him as exalted, and as having this absolute significance now and for ever. The question then arises, In what forms did Jesus Himself present this absolute significance to His own mind? How did He conceive it, and body it forth to others, so as to make an adequate impression on them? And are the forms of thought and of imagination which He employed for this purpose in a given historical environment as indispensable to us, and as binding in our totally different environment, as they were for those with whom Jesus stood face to face? To preach Christ it is necessary to be able to answer these questions not at haphazard, but on principle; and the answer may sometimes seem difficult.

To proceed by illustration: (a) One of the ways in which Jesus represented His absolute significance for the true religion was this: He regarded Himself as the Messiah. The Messianic rôle was one which could be filled only by one Person, and He Himself was the Person in question; He and no other was the Christ. But is 'the Christ' a conception of which we, in another age and with other antecedents, can make use for the same purpose? Only, it must be answered, if we employ the term with much latitude. What it suggests to us, as already pointed out, is the continuity of revelation, and the fulfilment through Jesus of all the hopes which, through history and prophecy, God had kindled in human hearts; it is the possibility of using it to express this that justifies us in retaining the name. But it is certain that for those who first came to believe in Jesus as the Christ the name was much more definite than it is for us; it had a shape and colour that it has no longer; it had expectations connected with it which for us have lost the vitality they once possessed. In

particular, the eschatological associations of the term have not, in their NT form, the importance for us which they had for the first believers. In the teaching of Jesus these associations cluster round the title 'the Son of Man,' which, at least after the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi, is used as synonymous with 'the Christ'; the Son of Man is identified with Jesus, and comes again, after His suffering and death, to establish the Kingdom, in the glory of His Father with the holy angels (Mar_8:31; Mar_8:38, Mat_10:33; Mat_16:27). This coming again, or, as the original disciples conceived it, this coming (παρουσία) in the character of the Christ, was expected, by those who first preached and received the gospel, to take place in their own generation; and it is difficult to argue that this expectation could have any other basis than the teaching of Jesus Himself. Nothing was more characteristic of primitive Christianity; it was the very essence of what the early Church meant by *hope*; it was for it part of the very meaning of 'the Christ.' Account has been taken, in art. Authority of Christ (vol. i. p. 149), of any considerations which go to qualify the certainty with which we ascribe to Jesus Himself this eschatological conception of the consummation of God's Kingdom, and especially this conviction as to its imminence; but if we do connect it with Him, and regard it as part of what is meant when He represents Himself as the Christ, clearly history requires us to recognize the inadequacy of that conception to be the vehicle of the truth. The Kingdom of God has been coming ever since Jesus left the world; but Jesus Himself, after nearly two thousand years, has not yet come in like manner as the disciples saw Him going into heaven (Act_1:11). We still believe that the Kingdom of God is coming; we believe this because we believe in Jesus; we believe that it is coming only through Him and as He comes; that is what the Christian of to-day means when he says we believe in Him as the Christ. But even the belief in His exaltation to God's right hand does not make possible for us that particular kind of expectation of His coming which burnt with so intense a flame in the breast of the Apostolic Church; quite apart from any preference or effort, our outlook on the future is different from theirs; and, while we do not abate in the least our recognition of the sole sovereignty of Jesus, and our assurance that God's Kingdom can come and God's promises be fulfilled through Him alone, we are compelled, apparently, to recognize that in infusing into the disciples His own assurance of the final triumph of God's cause in His own person, our Lord had to make use of representations which have turned out unequal to the truth. He had to put His sense of the absolute significance of His Person for God and man into a form which was relative to the mind of the time. The eschatological Christ, coming on the clouds of heaven, and coming in the lifetime of some who heard His voice, was one expression for Jesus of this absolute significance; and it is as such an expression—that is, as an assurance of the speedy triumph of God's cause in and through Him, and not in its spectacular detail—that we believe in it. It is not rejecting the absolute significance of Jesus to say that this spectacular detail is relative to the age and its mental outlook; but it would be a rejection of it, and a repudiation of Jesus as the

Christ, if we denied that the Kingdom of God—however experience enables us to picture its coming and consummation—comes and is consummated through Him alone. This truth must be preached if we really preach Christ.

(b) Jesus, however, has other ways of conveying His absolute significance. One of the simplest is that in which He represents Himself as judge of men, arbiter of their eternal destinies. It may be argued, no doubt, that the form in which this is expressed in Mat 7:21 ff; Mat 25:31 ff. is, in part at least, due to the Evangelist; ‘prophesying in the name of Jesus’ was a phenomenon which came into the world only after His death, and such an allusion to it as Mat 7:22, where it is treated as an obvious thing, would hardly have been intelligible in His lifetime. But there is no reason whatever to doubt that both this passage and the other convey the mind of Jesus about His own significance for men. Whatever be the rule of the judgment—doing the will of *His Father* (Mat 7:21), or humanity exhibited in practice in relation to those whom He calls *His brethren* (Mat 25:40)—it is a rule which has been finally embodied in Him. It is in Him that we see what doing the will of the Father means; it is in Him also that we see the law of humanity fulfilled. It is what we are when measured by His standard, judged by His judgment, that discloses the very truth about us. It has been urged that this prerogative of judgment is merely an element in the Jewish conception of the Messiah, and as such has been formally transferred to Jesus in the Gospels; but nothing is less formal in the NT than the conception of Jesus as judge. It does not rest on any borrowings from a pre-Christian Messianic dogmatic, but on the most real experiences of men in the presence of Jesus: ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord’ (Luk 5:8); ‘Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did’ (Joh 4:29). The experiences by which words like these were inspired give reality and solemnity to all the representations of Jesus as judge. Here again we may say that the spectacular representations of the judgment are a form which we may recognize to have only a relative value, while yet we do not dispute in the least the absolute truth that the standard of reality and of worth in the spiritual world is Jesus, and that no life can be finally estimated except by its relation to Him. The Gospel according to John is distinguished from the others by emphasizing the function of Christ as judge, and the continuous exercise of it in what might almost be called an automatic fashion. The Father has committed all judgment to the Son (Joh 5:23); and the process of judging goes on in the Gospel under our eyes. The very presence of Jesus sifts men; they gather round Him or are repelled from Him according to what they are. Something of absolute and final significance, it may be said, is transacted before our faces, as men show that they will or will not have anything to do with Jesus. It is eternal judgment revealed in the field of time, and Jesus is the judge. No one else could fill His place in this character, and we do not preach Christ as He was and is except by making this plain. Probably, however, in this case more than in any other it is rash to discount too cheaply what we think, rightly enough in principle, are but forms of conveying this truth, and forms unequal to the reality. The picture of the

Last Judgment in Mat 25:31-46 may not be true as a picture, the moral reality of the judgment may not be dependent at all on the scenic details here presented, but whether or not it is true as a picture, it is true in the moral impression it leaves on the mind, and this is the truth that is important. There is such a thing, if there is any truth in Christ at all, as final judgment; there is a right hand of the judge and a left, an inside of the door and an outside, a character that abides for ever and a character that collapses in irreparable ruin; and to realize of what kind character is, or where it must stand at last, we have only to confront it with Him. The man who cannot withstand the attraction of Jesus does not come into judgment, he has passed from death into life (Joh 5:24); the man who will not yield to the attraction of Jesus is judged already (Joh 3:18), and the judgment will be revealed at last. To recognize and proclaim the absolute significance of Jesus here is an essential part of preaching Christ.

(c) The supreme illustration of this incomparable significance of Jesus remains. It is given in what we may call *His consciousness of His relation to God*. To Jesus, God was the Father, and He Himself was the Son. It does not matter that God is a universal Father, and that all men are or are called to be His sons; Jesus recognizes this, and insists upon it, but He claims Sonship in a peculiar sense for Himself. He never speaks of Himself as *a* child of God, but as *the* Son, *simpliciter*. In speaking of God and Himself He uses ὁ πατήρ and ὁ υἱός in a way which implies that there could no more be a plural on the one side than on the other: see esp. Mat 11:27 f., Mar 13:32. It is natural to suppose that in the account of Jesus' baptism (Mat 3:17 ||) the heavenly voice which pronounces Him Son of God, in words borrowed from Psalms 2, means the term there to be taken in the Messianic 'official' sense; it is the Messianic consciousness of Jesus, as the accompanying narrative of the Temptation proves, which is expressed in ὁ υἱός μου. What the relation may have been in His mind between this (which defines His calling by relation to OT hopes) and the Divine Sonship exhibited in Mat 11:27, we may not be able to tell. It has been argued by some that the official Messianic Sonship, the calling to be God's King in Israel, widened and deepened in the mind of Jesus Himself into the consciousness of a unique relation to God, which found its most adequate expression in the language of Mat 11:27; by others, that only such a consciousness as is disclosed in Mat 11:27 enables us to understand how Jesus could ever have regarded Himself as the Messiah. The Messianic categories have been considered above; what we have here to do is to look at the less specifically Jewish way in which Jesus here reveals His absolute significance for religion. 'All things have been delivered to me by my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him' (see *Authority of Christ*, vol. i. p. 149). Here Jesus claims in the most explicit terms to have had the whole task of revealing God to men—the whole task of saving men, so far as that depends

upon their coming to know God—committed to Him.* [Note: It is fanciful, on account of παραδοθη, to suppose that Jesus is here contrasting His παραδόσεις, which has its starting-point in the Father, with the ‘traditions’ of the elders.] It is a task to which He is equal, and for which no other has any competence at all. Everything connected with it has been entrusted to Him, and to Him alone; there is not a man upon the earth who can know the Father except by becoming a debtor to Jesus. There is no such thing as preaching Christ unless we preach this: He is the mediator for all men of the knowledge of God as Father; that is, of that knowledge of God on which eternal life depends. This is the loftiest, the most universal, and the most gracious form in which the absolute significance of Jesus can be expressed: the loftiest, because it declares Him unequivocally to be the μονογενής, having His being in a relation to God constituted by perfect mutual understanding, and belonging to Him alone; the most universal, because the relation of Father and Son, while it can only be symbolic of the reality, uses a symbolism based on nature, not on history, and is therefore intelligible to all men, and not only (like Messiah) to one race; and the most gracious, for it suggests directly not only mutual understanding but mutual love, the love which unites the Father and the Son in the work of enlightening and redeeming men (cf. Mat_11:28 f.). It is not necessary, however, to dwell on this: the point is that in this central passage Jesus emphasizes His absolute significance in the two main directions in which it can be understood: He is to God what no other is, and He can therefore do for man what no other can do. He is the only-begotten Son, and the only Mediator between God and man. In preaching Christ in this sense, we have much more to go upon than this single utterance. The truth which it conveys, indeed, is not so much a truth revealed by Christ, as the truth which is embodied in Him; in order to appreciate it, it is necessary to have the experience of coming through Him to the Father, and of recognizing the Father in the Son. The interest of the Fourth Gospel consists to a large extent in this—that it is an expansion and illustration of these words. Jesus is presented there as the Word made flesh—the principle of revelation embodied in a human life; it is His work, so to speak, to enlighten every man, and apart from His work men remain in darkness. ‘No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared—or interpreted (ἐξηγήσατο)—him’ (Joh_1:18); ‘He that hath seen me hath seen the Father’ (Joh_14:9); ‘I am the way and the truth and the life: no one cometh to the Father but through me’ (Joh_14:6). This is the key to the peculiar passages in the Gospel in which Jesus says ἐγώ εἰμι without any expressed predicate (Joh_4:26? Joh_8:24; Joh_8:28, Joh_13:19): we are meant to think of Him as the great decisive Personality, who stands in a place which is His alone, and by relation to whom all men finally stand or fall. It may be that the expression given to this in the Fourth Gospel owes something to the writer as well as to Jesus; but what the writer expresses is at least the impression made on him by Jesus, and, as Mat_11:27 and Mar_13:32 show,

the impression is one which answers exactly to Jesus' consciousness of Himself. The words quoted above from Jn. only do justice to Jesus' sense of what He was in relation to God and man, and it is not possible to preach Christ in any adequate sense if we ignore or deny the truth they convey. To do so would be to reject both what Jesus said and what He was in the experience of those who first believed on Him.

6. With the rest of the NT in mind, the question is naturally raised at this point, whether Jesus gave any further definition to the idea of mediation than that which we find in this passage. All men owe to Him the knowledge of God as Father, but how does He impart it? All men must become His debtors if they are to have the benefit of this supreme revelation: is there anything which more than another enables us to estimate the dimensions of this debt? If there is, then in preaching Christ that thing would require to have a corresponding prominence. It is obvious that Jesus mediates the knowledge of God to men, not by His words only, but, as is shown elsewhere (Authority of Christ, vol. i. p. 149), by His being and life as well. It is the Son in whom the Father is revealed, and everything in the Son contributes to the revelation: His teaching, His works, His intercourse with others, His sufferings and death. The revelation is made in and through all these, and none of them can be omitted in preaching Christ. To borrow words of Wellhausen which are not without a misleading element (*Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, p. 114): 'His religion is found not only in what He taught publicly, but in His nature and bearing under all circumstances, at home and on the street, in what He said and did not say, in what He did consciously or without being conscious of it, in the way in which He ate and drank and rejoiced and suffered. His Person, with which they had the privilege of intercourse in daily life, made an even deeper impression on His disciples than His teaching.' All this is true, but not the whole truth. The NT in all its parts lays a quite peculiar emphasis on the death of Christ, and in doing so it is not false to His own conception of the way in which He mediated the knowledge of the Father to men. His death, it may be said, does not require to be interpreted otherwise than His life; it is His life carried to a consistent consummation under the circumstances of the time; it is part of His life, not something distinct from it. This also is true, but, according to the representation in the Gospels, it is less than the whole truth. His death is a part of His life which has an essential relation to His work as the revealer of the Father, and the King in the Kingdom of God; it was recognized by Jesus Himself as Divinely necessary, it was the subject of frequent instruction to His disciples, and it is commemorated by His will in the most solemn rite of Christian worship (see Mar_8:31; Mar_9:31; Mar_10:33; Mar_10:45; Mar_14:24 and ||). It is a fair inference from this, combined with the place taken by the Passion in the Evangelic narratives, and the place given to the interpretation of Christ's death in the Epistles, that to preach Christ it is necessary to represent His death as a main part, or rather as *the* main part, of the cost at which His work of mediation is done. In what particular way it is to be construed is an ulterior question. Our general conception of the moral order of

the world, our sense of individuality and of the solidarity of the race, our apprehension of sin as generic, or constitutional, or voluntary, the mental equipment with which we approach the whole subject, may determine us to interpret it in ways which are intellectually distinguishable; no given explanation of the death of Jesus can claim finality any more than any given interpretation of His Person. But just as we may say that Christ is not preached unless the Person of Christ is presented in its absolute significance for religion, as the one Person through whom the knowledge of the Father is mediated to men, so we may say further that Christ is not preached in the sense which answers to His own consciousness of what He was doing, unless it is made clear and central that His mediation necessitated and therefore cost His death. In the simplest words, it is necessary to say, in preaching Christ, not only that He is *μ*ονογενής and Mediator, but that He died for men. It was not for Him to insist on this as a doctrine; it was for the Church to apprehend it as a fact, and to put it into doxologies (Rev. 1:5; Rev. 5:9); but in doing so, it could go back to unmistakable words of Jesus Himself, and to the sacrament which speaks for Him more impressively than any words.

7. Jesus' consciousness of Himself, which, however hard it may be for us to apprehend it, has certainly the character just described—in other words, is a consciousness of His absolute and incomparable significance for all the relations of God and man—must lie at the heart of all preaching of which He is the object. He had this significance while He moved among men on the earth, and it was declared and made unmistakable to His disciples when He rose from the dead. It is on Jesus' consciousness of Himself, therefore, including His consciousness of His vocation, and on His exaltation to God's right hand, that the preaching of Christ rests. As has already been remarked (see § 3), the writer of this article assumes that in the Synoptic Gospels we have a representation given of the consciousness of Jesus, on the truth of which we can quite securely proceed. No doubt this has been questioned, most recently and radically by Wellhausen. The Gospels (to put it concisely) were written by Christians, and Jesus was not a Christian. They contain the gospel, that is, the Christian religion; but He knew nothing about the gospel, although it is put into His lips. He was a Jew. He preached no new faith. He taught men to do the will of God, which like all Jews He found in the Law and the other sacred books. The only difference was that He knew a better way of doing the will of God than that which the scribes of His day enforced on the people, and that He called men to leave their traditions and learn of Him. Wellhausen not only removes from the mind of Christ in this way everything that in Christian preaching has ever been known as gospel, everything that could by any possibility be regarded as contributing to Christology and Soteriology, but the great mass of what up till now has been regarded by criticism as the best attested part of the Evangelic record, the words of Jesus common to Matthew and Luke. Most of the parables, too, are sacrificed. Even the few in Mark are

not all genuine, and Wellhausen feels free to pass severe strictures alike on those of Matthew and of Luke. All that need be said of this is, that if Jesus had been no more than Wellhausen represents Him to be, then it is inconceivable that either the Gospels or the gospel could ever have been generated from any impulse He could impart to human minds. As Jülicher puts it (*Theol. Literaturztg.* 1905, No. 23), the primitive Church is thus made to appear richer, greater, and freer than its Head: in Jerusalem it surpasses Him by producing the marvellous Evangelic history, in St. Paul it surpasses Him by producing a new imposing theory of redemption. The historian looks in vain for anything analogous to this elsewhere. We do not understand how it could be done. We do not understand how the Church so suddenly lost the power of doing it. We do not understand how a man like St. Paul, we may say how men like those who wrote all the NT books except the Gospels, should have been so incapable of writing a page which reminds us of them. Although it is true to say that truth guarantees only itself, not its author, the truths exhibited by the Evangelists have a way of coalescing into a sum of truth which is identical with Jesus. As Deissmann has expressed it,* [Note: 'Evangelium u. Urchristentum' in *Beiträge zur Weiter-entwicklung der christlichen Religion*, p. 85.] they are not separate pearls threaded on a string, but flashes of the same diamond. Separately they guarantee themselves, but collectively they are a spiritual evidence to the historical reality of the great Person to whom the gospel owes its being, and to whom all preaching is a testimony. There is a kind of criticism which tacitly assumes that it is a mistake to believe in Christ as those who first preached Him believed; He was a Person who appeared in history, and therefore cannot have the absolute significance which must attach to the object of religious faith, and which does attach to Jesus throughout the NT. Such criticism makes it its business to reduce this figure to a true scale—which means to make His personality exactly like our own, and His consciousness exactly what our own may be. Wellhausen illustrates the direct application of this criticism to the Gospels; we see how it is brought to bear on the Epistles in such a remark as Wernle's, that a faith in Christ like that of St. Paul (which as good as deified its object) implies a certain want of faith in the living God. The consciousness of God must have decayed or lost its vital intensity in the Apostle before he could write the Epistle to the Colossians. Such a writing, we are almost invited to think, is on the way to justify the Jewish sneer: the creed of Christians is that there is no God, but that Jesus is His Son. In the face of criticism of this type, we hold with confidence the trustworthiness of the Evangelic representation, and venture to say that no NT writer, not even St. Paul or St. John, has anything to say of the absolute significance of Jesus, in all the relations of God and man, which goes beyond Jesus' consciousness of Himself as the Gospels preserve it. And, further, we venture to say that no NT writing, however casual or informal, falls short of the testimony which Jesus, according to the Evangelists, bears to Himself. Everywhere Jesus has the place which He claims for Himself, and Christians are conscious of an absolute dependence on Him for their standing towards God. To give Him this place is the only way to preach Christ.

8. The earliest specimens of Apostolic preaching are the sermons of St. Peter in Acts. Their value is universally acknowledged. According to Schmiedel (*Encyc. Bibl.* i. 48), 'almost the only element that is historically important (in the early chapters of Acts) is the Christology of the speeches of Peter. This, however, is important in the highest degree.... It is hardly possible not to believe that this Christology of the speeches of Peter must have come from a primitive source.' It starts with the historical person as such: 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God to you by miracles and portents and signs which God wrought through him, as you yourselves know' (Act 2:22). This approbation of Jesus by His wonderful works might seem confuted by His death, but to this the Apostle has a twofold answer. On the one hand, the death itself was Divinely necessary; He was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, evidence of which was found in the Scriptures (Act 2:23, cf. 1Co 15:4). On the other hand, it was annulled by the resurrection of Jesus and His exaltation to God's right hand. It was this that made Him both Lord and Christ, and in this character He determined for the Apostles and for all men their whole relation to God. To Him they owed already the gift of the Holy Ghost; and, as St. Peter explicitly states elsewhere (Act 11:15; Act 11:17; Act 15:8), to receive the Holy Ghost is to be religiously complete. To His coming they looked for times of refreshing, indeed for the 'times of the restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old' (Act 3:21). All prophecy, to put it otherwise, is conceived as Messianic; all the hopes which God has inspired are hopes to be fulfilled through Christ. He is Prince of life (Act 3:15), Lord of all (Act 10:36), ordained of God as Judge of living and dead (Act 10:42). Those who repent, believe, and are baptized in His name receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost (Act 2:38, Act 10:43). All these expressions imply that from the very beginning Jesus had for His disciples that absolute significance which we have seen belonged to His own consciousness of Himself; but in addition to this, it is put with singular force in a passage which expresses nothing else: 'There is not salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Act 4:12). It may be possible to strip from the gospel of St. Peter, without detriment to its essence, some of that vesture of eschatological Messianism which it necessarily wore at the time; but it is not possible that religion should be to us what it was to him,—it is not possible, in the original sense of the words, to preach Christ—unless we give to Christ that same significance in all the relations of God and man which He has in St. Peter's preaching. It is not too much to say that side by side with his frank recognition of Jesus as a man (Act 2:22), whose career in history he could himself look back upon, St. Peter regarded Jesus in His exaltation as forming with God His Father one Divine causality at work for the salvation of men. It was only in virtue of so regarding Him that he could preach Him as he did, and essentially similar convictions are still necessary if preaching is to be called preaching *Christ*. It is not necessary to argue that the Christology of the First Epistle of Peter is on a level with this. In many respects it is more explicit. There has been more reflexion on the

absolute significance of Jesus in religion, on His relation to the OT, on the power of His resurrection, on the virtue of His Passion as connected with redemption from sin, and on the example set in His life and death. But two passages may be briefly referred to as going to the root of the matter. The first is Act 1:21, where Christians are described as ‘you who through him [Jesus] are believers in God.’ It is to Him that Christian faith owes its peculiar qualities and virtues: men may be theists apart from Him, but to have specifically Christian faith in God we must be His debtors. The other is the longer passage, so much discussed, Act 3:18 to Act 4:6. Whatever else this passage reveals, it reveals the writer’s conviction that for the dead as well as the living there is no hope of salvation but Christ. Not only in this world, but in all worlds, whatever is called redemption owes its being to Him. All spiritual beings, angels, principalities, and powers, are subject to Him. The Christian is a person who is in Him (Act 5:14), and accordingly by Him everything in the Christian life is determined. To give Christ this place in our spiritual world, though a different mode of conceiving the world of the spirit may modify the intellectual form in which we do so, is indispensable to preaching Christ. Apart from His holding such a place it is possible only to preach *about* Him, not to make *Him* the sum of our preaching.

9. To pass from St. Peter to St. Paul is to pass from one who had the most vivid personal recollections of the Man Christ Jesus to one who had no such recollections at all; and it is all the more striking to find that both of them preach Christ in the same sense; or, perhaps, we should say, mean the same thing by preaching Christ. St. Paul’s acquaintance with Christ began when the Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus, and for him Jesus is predominantly the Lord of Glory (1Co 2:8). When he preaches Him it is as Lord (2Co 4:5); that is, as exalted at God’s right hand. To call Him ‘Lord,’ to acknowledge His exaltation, is to make the fundamental Christian confession (1Co 12:3, Rom 10:9). It is often asserted that whatever differences may have existed between St. Paul and the Jerusalem Church, there can have been no difference of a Christological character; but it is not vital to Christianity that this should be so. It is just as plausible to argue from 2Co 1:19 that the Corinthians had heard preachers who did not preach Christ precisely as Paul and Silvanus and Timothy did; and the argument might be supported by reference to 2Co 5:16; 2Co 11:4. Further, the fact that St. Paul has something which he calls ‘my gospel,’ a conception of Christianity and a mode of presenting it which had peculiarities due to the peculiarity of his religious experience, might be adduced on the same side. And the presumption thus raised could not be overturned simply by an appeal to 1Co 15:4; 1Co 15:11, which would prove only that his gospel rested, exactly as did that of the Twelve, on the great facts of the death and resurrection of Jesus interpreted in the light of Scripture. What it is important to see is that, be the variations in mode of thought or conception what they may, the Apostle ascribes to Jesus that absolute significance for religion which we have already seen attach to Him both in His own

mind and in the preaching of St. Peter. This is the basis and the content of preaching Christ.

It might seem enough to refer to the salutations of the Epistles, in which St. Paul wishes the Churches grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 1:7), or addresses them as having their being in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1Th 1:1). Here we have the Father and Christ confronting men, so to speak, on the same plane, co-operating as one Divine power for their salvation. When St. Paul preaches Christ it is as a Person who has this power and importance, and stands in this relation to God and men. Or we might refer to what perhaps comes closest in form to Jesus' own mode of expression, the passage in 1Co 15:28, in which 'the Son' is used absolutely, as in Mar 13:32. There is a subordination of the Son to the Father here, and yet no more here than in Mar 13:32 or in Mat 11:27 could we conceive of either word in the plural. Or again, we might refer to such passages as those in which St. Paul contrasts all other persons with Christ. 'What is Apollos? what is Paul? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?' (1Co 3:5; 1Co 1:13). This is entirely in the line of the contrast between the many servants and the one beloved Son in Mar 12:1-12, or of the sayings of Jesus in Mat 23:8-10. Of course both these Evangelic passages have been disputed, but the present writer sees no reason to doubt that in substance both are rightly assigned to Jesus. What St. Paul means in the words cited is that any other person has only a relative importance in Christianity, while Christ's importance is absolute. The Church would have missed Paul and Apollos, but it would have been there; whereas but for Christ it could not have been there at all. It existed only *in* Him. This is assumed in all preaching of which He is the object. His significance for the Church is not in the same line with that of Paul and Apollos; it is on the same line with that of the Father. No matter what the mode in which St. Paul conceives of Christ, he always conceives of Him as having this incomparable significance, and it is worth while to note the ways in which it appears.

(a) Sometimes they are, so to speak, unstudied: the truth is put, and possibly with emphasis, but there is no particular reflexion upon it. Thus, in 1Co 3:11 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.' This comes very close to Act 4:11 f. (see above). Again, when we read in 2Co 1:20 'how many soever are the promises of God, in him is the yea,' we are confronted with the same truth. There is not a single promise God has made, not a single hope with which He has inspired human hearts, which is to have any fulfilment except in Him. The mental attitude is the same in Gal 1:8 f. The form of St. Paul's arguments is sometimes more disconcerting to us in Galatians than in any other of his Epistles, yet nowhere does he keep closer to the heart of his gospel. What these two seemingly intolerant verses mean is that Christ is the whole of the Christian religion, and that to introduce other things side by side with Him, as if they could supplement Him, or share in His absolute

significance for salvation, is treason to Christ Himself. Christ crucified—the whole revelation of God’s redeeming love to sinners is there; the sinful soul abandoning itself in unreserved faith to this revelation—the whole of the Christian religion is there. Whoever brings into religion anything else than Christ and faith, as though anything else could conceivably stand on the same plane, is, wittingly or unwittingly, the deadly enemy of the gospel. Such expressions as these exhibit the absolute significance which Christ had for the Apostle in the most unquestionable way, but they imply no speculative Christology. We may hold them, and to preach Christ we must hold them, but we may do so without raising any of the theological questions which have been raised in connexion with them. There is hardly a page of St. Paul’s writings which could not be quoted in illustration. Confining ourselves to the Epp. to the Thess., as his earliest letters, and omitting the salutations referred to above, we find everywhere the absolute dependence of the Christian on Christ,—a kind of relation which would be not only inconceivable but immoral if any other than Christ were the subject of it. Just as men in general are said to live and move and have their being in God, Christians live and move and have, their being ‘in Christ.’ What space is to bodies, Christ is to believing souls: they live in Him, and all the functions of their life are determined by Him. St. Paul has confidence *in the Lord* toward the Thessalonians (2Th 3:4); he charges and entreats them *in the Lord Jesus Christ* (2Th 3:12); they stand *in the Lord* (1Th 3:8); he gives them commandments *through the Lord Jesus* (1Th 4:2); church rulers are those who are over them *in the Lord* (1Th 5:12); the Christian rule of life is the will of God *in Christ Jesus* concerning them (1Th 5:18); the Christian departed are the dead *in Christ* (1Th 4:16); all benediction is summed up in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Th 5:28, 2Th 1:12; 2Th 3:18); Jesus and the Father are co-ordinated as the object of prayer (1Th 3:11), and prayer is directly addressed to the Lord, *i.e.* to Christ (1Th 3:12). Our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we are to obtain salvation at the great day, is He who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with Him (1Th 5:10). It is as though all that God does for us were done in and through Him; so that He confronts us as Saviour in Divine glory and omnipotence. We may trust Him as God is trusted, live in Him as we live in God, appeal to Him to save us as only God can save; and it is only as we do so that we have in Him a Person whom we can preach. Such a Person we can have, as the passages cited show, without raising any of the questions with which St. Paul himself subsequently wrestled. But the right way to express all this—which does not first appear in Colossians, but is of the essence of Christianity from the beginning—is not to say with Wernle that the consciousness of God has been weakened, but that the idea of God has been Christianized: the Father is known in the Son, and is known as working through Him to the end of our salvation. And this, it need hardly be repeated, is identical in religious import with what we have found in the mind of Christ Himself.

(b) Sometimes, however, the Apostle presents us with more speculative conceptions of Christ. He is not simply a Person who has appeared in history, and has been exalted in Divine power and glory. He is what may be called a universal Person, a typical or representative Person, who has for the new humanity the same kind of significance as Adam had for the old. Adam was the head of the one, Christ is the head of the other. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. The acts of Christ have a representative or universal character: the death that He died for all has somehow the significance which the death of all would itself have; in His resurrection we see the first-fruits of a new race which shall wear the image of the heavenly. Broadly speaking, this way of conceiving Christ, in which the individual historical Person is elevated or expanded into a universal or representative Person, pervades the Epp. to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians (see esp. Rom 5:12 ff., 1Co 15:21-49). As these Epp. are central in St. Paul's writings, there is a certain justification for laying this conception of Christ—the second Adam—at the basis of a Pauline Christology (as was done by Somerville in his *St. Paul's Conception of Christ*). It is the conception which lends itself most readily to 'mystical' interpretations of Christ's work and of Christian experience. To bear the Christian name we must 'identify ourselves' with all the experiences of the Second Adam. But though it is eminently characteristic of St. Paul, it is neither his first nor his last way of representing the absolute significance of Christ. It belongs to the controversial period in which everything Christian was defined by contrast. What St. Paul wanted to annihilate was legalism, the influence of the statutory in religion; and he argues that the really important categories in the religious history of humanity, those of universal and abiding significance, are not law, but sin and grace. The great figures in the history are not Moses, but Adam and Christ. He works out the parallel or rather the contrast between them with enthusiasm; but when we realize what he is doing, we feel that this is only one way of giving Christ His peculiar place. It is, however, a way which will maintain itself as long as the antithesis of sin and grace determines the religious life; and as this is a limit beyond which we cannot see, it seems involved in any adequate preaching of Christ that He should be preached in this universal character as the head of a new humanity.

(c) In his later Epp., St. Paul preaches Christ in what seems a more wonderful light. Christ is presented to us not merely as a historical, or as a universal, but also as an eternal or Divine Person. That which is manifested to the world in Him does not originate with its manifestation. The explanation of it is not to be sought merely in the history of Israel (as though Jesus were no more than a national Messiah), nor even in the history of humanity (as though He were no more than the restorer of the ruin which began with Adam): it is to be sought in the eternal being of God. When St. Paul came in contact with Jesus, he came in contact with what he felt instinctively was the ultimate reality in the universe. Here, he could not but be conscious, is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, all that is meant—all that has ever been meant—by 'God.' Here is 'all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Col 1:19; Col 2:9):

here is the revelation of what God essentially and eternally is, and here therefore is that by which all our thinking must be ruled. Christ belongs to, or is involved in, because He is the manifestation of, the eternal being and nature of God. How far does this carry us when we try to think it out? Possibly not further, in some respects, than we have come already. Christ, it may be said, is represented as an eternal Person when He is spoken of as *final Judge of all* (Act 10:42, 2Co 5:10); that is eternity as apprehended in *conscience*. Again, He is represented as an eternal Person when we speak of Him as *final Heir* or *Lord of all things* (Heb 1:2, Mat 28:18); that is eternity as apprehended in *imagination*. But in Col. it is not through the conscience or the imagination, but through a more *speculative faculty*, that St. Paul interprets his conception of the eternal being of Christ. If Christ really has the absolute significance which all Christian experience implies,—for in all such experience we meet with *God* in Him,—then *all things* must be defined by relation to Christ; the universe must be reconstituted with Him as its principle, its centre of unity, its goal. Nature must be conceived as an order of things brought into being with a view to His Kingdom, and this implies that He was present in the constitution of nature. To say that He was ideally but not actually present,—present only in the mind of God as the intended consummation of the process,—would have been to St. Paul to introduce a distinction which we have no means of applying where God is concerned. The true doctrine of Christ—this is what St. Paul teaches in Colossians—involves a doctrine of the universe. The doctrine of the universe is put only negatively, or so as to exclude error, when we say that God created all things out of nothing; such a formula teaches only the absolute dependence of nature on God. But it is put positively, or so as to convey the truth in which the world is interested, when we say that all things were created in Christ. St. Paul's conviction of this truth is based (he believes) on experience: in his consciousness as a Christian man he is assured that in Christ he has touched the last reality in the universe, the *ens realissimum*, the truth through which all other truths are to be defined and understood. In other words, a true apprehension of the absolute significance of Christ involves a specifically Christian conception of the universe. The Christian religion is not true to Christ (as St. Paul understood His significance) unless it has the courage to conceive a Christian metaphysic, or, in simpler words, to *Christianize all its thoughts of God and the world*. Put in this form, we can see that in the last resort it is still necessary to share the Apostle's convictions at this point if we mean to preach Christ. For if there is any region of reality which does not depend for its meaning and value on its relation to Him,—if the truth with which we come in contact in Him is not the ultimate truth of God, the master light of all our seeing,—then His importance is only relative, and He has no abiding place in religion which requires that He should be preached at all. But in reality He is a Person so great that all nature and history and religion have to be interpreted through Him. All we call being, and all we call redemption, need Him to explain them. The love revealed in Him is the key to all mysteries. The categories we use to make His redemption intelligible are the only categories by which we can completely understand anything.

Once Christ's absolute significance has become clear to us,—and, as already said, it is involved in every Christian experience,—we discover that our task, if we would understand the system of things in which we live, is not to find natural law in the spiritual world, but rather to find spiritual law—indeed, specifically Christian law—in the natural world. So far as we do so we are providing scientific attestation for the conception of Christ as a Divine and eternal Person.

10. The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel, it need hardly be added, share in this conception of Christ. In neither is it allowed to infringe on the truth of His human nature while He lived on earth: indeed, of all the NT writings, these two in various ways make most use of Christ's humanity for religious and moral ends. But as the subject of this article is not Christology, it is not necessary to go into details. The prologue to the Fourth Gospel has precisely the same Christian experience behind it as the first chapter of Col., and the same experience, when taken seriously, will always inspire the mind to think along the same lines. The conception of the Logos, as has often been remarked, is not carried by the writer beyond the prologue: it may in reality affect the Evangelist's way of representing certain things, but it is not formally embodied in the Gospel. It was a conception widely current in the writer's time, whatever its sources, and he used it to introduce Jesus in circles which naturally thought in such terms. It does not follow that to introduce or to explain Christ among men who think in other categories, the preacher is still bound to make use of this one. 'There is only one thing,' says Dr. Sanday (*Criticism of the Fourth Gospel*, 198) 'that he [the Evangelist] seeks. He wants a formula to express the cosmical significance of the person of Christ.' That in which we must agree with him if we in turn would preach Christ, is his conviction of this significance, not the formula in which it suited him at the close of the first century to express it. That like Paul he *had* such a conviction, based on experience, there is no doubt. The Son of God was not to St. John a lay figure to be draped in the borrowed robes either of Messianic dogmatic or of Alexandrian philosophy. He was a Being so great, and had left on the soul of His witness an impression so deep, that the latter felt it could be satisfied by nothing but a reconstitution of his universe in which this wonderful Person was put at the heart of everything—creation, providence, revelation, and redemption being all referred to Him. In St. John as in St. Paul the absolute significance of Christ in the relations of God and man, which is the immediate certainty of Christian experience, stamps Him as a Divine and eternal Person, by relation to whom the world and all that is in it must be described anew. We may say if we will that he uses the Logos as a formula to describe the cosmical significance of Christ, but that is perhaps less than the truth. He uses it rather to suggest that truth, as truth is in Jesus, is the deepest truth of all, and the most comprehensive, and that under its inspiration and guidance we must Christianize all our conceptions of God, nature, and history. He who is not in sympathy with this conviction will not find it easy to preach Christ in any sense in which the NT will support him.

11. If, however, we are in sympathy with this conviction, it may fairly be argued that we can preach Christ without raising any further questions. We must find the absolute significance of Jesus in the area within which Jesus presented Himself to men, 'beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up' (Act 1:22). This was the basis on which the gospel was launched into history, faith evoked, and the Church founded. This was the gospel of the original Apostolic testimony, and it is within its limits that the power of Christ must be felt. Once we do recognize this power, and its incomparable and unique significance, we are prepared to let our minds go further, and to appreciate at its true value what the Apostles and Evangelists tell us of such things as the pre-existence of Christ and the condescension of His entrance into the world. But these can never be the first things in preaching Christ. To put them first is really to put stumbling-blocks in the way of faith. Faith is evoked by seeing Jesus and hearing Him, and we see and hear Him only within the range indicated above. It is only faith, too, that preaches; preaching is faith's testimony to Christ. Hence, although faith must amount to a conviction of Christ's absolute significance, it must find the basis of this conviction in the historical Saviour, and it is only by appeal to the historical Saviour that it can reproduce itself in others. Accordingly it may exist and may render effective testimony to Christ without raising questions that carry us beyond this area. How we are to think of the superhistorical relation to God of the Person whose absolute significance we recognize in history, how we are to think of what is usually called His pre-existence, and of the marvel of His entrance into the world of nature and of history: these are questions which faith's conviction as to Christ's significance will dispose us to face in a certain spirit rather than another, but they are not questions on which the existence of the gospel, or the possibility of faith, or of preaching Christ, is dependent. With such faculties as we have, and especially such an inability to make clear to ourselves what we mean by the relation of the temporal to the eternal,—a relation which is involved in all such questions,—it may even be that we recognize our inability to grasp truth about them in forms for which we can challenge the assent of others. We can be certain from Christ's life that His very presence in the world is the assurance of an extraordinary condescension and grace in God, even if we are baffled in trying to think out all that is involved either in His coming forth from the Father or in His entrance into humanity. But if on the basis of an experience evoked by the Apostolic testimony we can call Him Lord and Saviour, recognizing in Him the only-begotten Son through whom alone we are brought to the Father, then we can preach Him, be our ignorance otherwise as deep as it may be.

12. It might have seemed natural, in the discussion of such a question, to refer more directly to the various *criteria* of Christianity which the NT itself suggests, e.g. Rom 10:9, 1Jn 4:2 f. But the last of these two passages only emphasizes the historical character of Christianity, the truth of our Lord's manhood, and the first the exaltation of Jesus: and to both of these justice has been done. The combination of

the two is indeed required in preaching Christ, and it is all that is required. The reality of Jesus' life on earth as He Himself was conscious of it, the life of One uniquely related to God, and present in our world to make us all His debtors for revelation and redemption; and the exaltation of such a One to the right hand of God: it is on this that preaching Christ depends. Into this we can put all the convictions by which the NT writers were inspired, and all that we know of the words and deeds of Jesus: and while we share at the heart the faith of Apostles and Evangelists, we do not feel bound by all the forms in which they cast their thoughts. The faith which stimulated intelligence so wonderfully in them will have the same effect on all Christians, and they will not disown any who call Jesus Lord, and give Him the name which is above every name.

Literature.—Harnack, *Wesen des Christentums*; See berg, *Grundwahrh. der christl. Rel.*; Cremer, *Wesen des Christentums*; Adams Brown, *Essence of Christianity*; Wernle, *Anfänge unserer Rel.*; Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, Lectt. vi. and vii.

James Denney.

☒ Prediction

PREDICTION.—See Prophet.

☒ Premeditation

PREMEDITATION.—1. There is frequent evidence of this quality in the teachings of Christ, and in the experiences of His life. Regarding Him simply on the common level of humanity, as for this faculty we necessarily must, there is little ground for the assertion so often made that He was an enthusiast, dependent on the inspiration of the moment. The occasional intuitions of the Divine are no explanation of the great body of His teaching. There is an inborn forethought, a native endowment of premeditation, that, humanly speaking, goes to the building up of His greatest thoughts, uttered or wrought. No accident or impulse gave birth to the Sermon on the Mount. Its varied teachings, the keywords of a spiritual and moral revolution yet to be effected in the world, strike one as the result of most careful observation, comparison, and imagination—all the product of patient premeditation. From His entrance into the active Gospel story, in that prelude of the Boy in the Temple, to the calm strength with which He faced the last days, it is a gift of deep insight into